Divine Power *and* Anger *diſplayed in*
EARTHQUAKES.

A

SERMON

Occaſioned by the late

EARTHQUAKE,

In NEW-ENGLAND,

November 18. 1755.

And Preached, the next LORD's-Day,
at *Point-Shirley.*

By MATHER BYLES, A.M.

Publiſhed at the preſſing Importunity of the Hearers.

Ezek. xxvii. 2, 3, 28. *O Thou that art ſituate at the Entry of the Sea---Thy Borders are in the Midſt of the Seas, Thy Builders have perfected thy Beauty.--- The Suburbs ſhall ſhake at the Sound-----*

Iſai. xli. 5. *The Iſles ſaw it, and feared, the Ends of the Earth were afraid, drew near, and came.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Divine *Power* and *Anger* diſplay'd in EARTHQUAKES.

JER. X. 10.

--At his Wrath the Earth ſhall tremble.-

THE awful and unuſual Providence of GOD in the Week paſt, in which he has viſited us with a remarkable Earthquake, has been the Occaſion of my ſelecting the Words before us, for our Meditation at this Time. If we ſhould neglect to take a proper Notice, or to make a ſuitable Improvement of an Event of this Kind, we ſhould undoubtedly act againſt the Light of Nature, the firſt Principles, and moſt evident Dictates of Reaſon. Even theſe could teach *Jonah*'s Mariners in a Tempeſt, every one to ariſe & call upon his God: tho' they were Heathen, unenlightned by Revelation, Strangers to the Covenant of Promiſe, and Aliens

Aliens from the Common-Wealth of *Iſrael.* They who dwell in the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth are afraid of his Tokens. Certainly therefore our Guilt and Puniſhment would be enhanced and aggravated, if we ſhould omit this natural Duty in a Caſe of equal Diſtreſs and Danger; if we ſhould incur the Character of thoſe who regard not the Works of the Lord, neither conſider the Operation of his Hands. We call our ſelves Chriſtians, we profeſs the true Religion, and enjoy the Means of Grace, the Oracles and Ordinances of God in their utmoſt Purity and Perfection: It may juſtly therefore be expected that we ſhould do more than others who are not favour'd with the like Advantages, that we ſhould be more ſerious and circumſpect in our Behaviour on ſuch an Occaſion; more frequent and fervent in our Addreſſes at the Throne of Grace, more careful and critical in our Enquiries into the Grounds of the divine Diſpleaſure, and wherefore our God is thus contending with us.

The God of Patience is yet waiting to be gracious; He is loth to ſtrike the fatal Blow, to overwhelm us in univerſal and unavoidable Deſtruction. He has Tho'ts of Pity towards us; his Heart is turned within him, his Repentings are kindled together: How ſhall I give thee up *Ephraim?* How ſhall I deliver thee *Iſrael?* How ſhall I make thee as *Admah?* How ſhall I ſet thee as *Zeboim?* We may yet be reconciled to him in and thro' our Lord Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt, the great and only Mediator: But if thus having Space to repent, we yet repent not, we ſhall find that it is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God. If we deſpiſe the Riches of Divine Goodneſs, Forbearance & Long-ſuffering; there will be nothing before us but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. He will again viſit us with an Earthquake, or with ſome other deſolating Judgment; He has other Judgments in Store, other Arrows in his Quiver: And verily, it will then be more tolerable for *Tyre* & *Sidon*, for *Sodom* & *Gomorrah* than for us. After our hard and impenitent Heart, we ſhall treaſure up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God. 'At his Wrath the Earth ſhall tremble, and the 'Nations ſhall not be able to abide his Indig-'nation.

In handling the Words, I propoſe to conſider two Propoſitions which are evidently implied in them, and which may make Way for the Enquiry, What Improvement we are to make of the awful Providence in the Week paſt. —*At his Wrath the Earth ſhall tremble.*— This teaches us that an Earthquake is a Work of Almighty Power, and a Token of Divine Anger.

I. An Earthquake is a Work of Almighty Power.

No

No Doubt natural Cauſes may be aſſigned for this *Phænomenon*. An impriſoned Vapour too cloſely pent, or too ſtrongly compreſſed in the Caverns beneath, will, thro' a natural Elaſticity, abhor Confinement, dilate and expand, ſwell and heave up the Surface of the Earth, producing a Tremor and Commotion, till it either finds Vent, or, from ſome other Cauſe, it is ſmothered, and its Violence abated. Could we look into the Vaults below, over which we now walk without Fear, and in ſo much ſeeming Security, to ſee the tremendous *Apparatus* there: in ſome Places, immenſe Tracts of Sulphureous and Combuſtible Materials that lie buried, and wait for Nothing but a ſingle Spark to tear all before them in a ſudden and irreſiſtable Exploſion; In others, how thin the Arch which interpoſes between us and a Furnace of Flame, which curls up againſt it, waſts it away, cauſes it to grow thinner and thinner, and leſs able to ſupport us: Should we not ſhudder at ſuch a Proſpect, when the Imagination of it fills us with ſo much Horror and Amazement! And yet this is very probably the State & Condition of our Globe at preſent. It has a natural Tendency to a final Conflagration. It is kept in Store and reſerved unto Fire againſt the Day of Judgment and Perdition of ungodly Men. And that ſame Diſpoſition of Things which fits it for this Cataſtrophe, renders it alſo liable to Earthquakes.

But

But we muſt not imagine from hence, that an Earthquake, becauſe it may be accounted for on Philoſophical Principles, is a caſual Event, or that ſome Chance has happened unto us. It is God at Work, tho' he works by the Intervention of ſecond Cauſes. Tho' it is no Miracle, it is the Effect of Almighty Power: This is frequently declared in the ſacred Pages: Nay this is taken for granted in the Context as an indiſputable Point; and *Jehovah* proves himſelf to be the only true God, in Oppoſition to all the Idols of the Heathen, from this very Argument, 'The Lord is the true God; He is the 'living God, and an everlaſting King; at his 'Wrath the Earth ſhall tremble, and the Nati-'ons ſhall not be able to abide his Indignation.

How often do we find this wonderful and terrible Work aſcribed to God in the holy Scriptures? He looketh on the Earth and it trembleth; He toucheth the Hills and they ſmoke. At his Command a Vulcanoe is li't up to the univerſal Terror and Conſternation of the guilty Inhabitants round it. Deep groans the affrighted Earth, at his Preſence; and the awful Sound is reverberated from Cavern to Cavern thro' all its moſt intricate, gloomy and profound Receſſes. The whole Continent ſhivers & quakes to its remoteſt Foundations; the Pillars of Heaven tremble and are aſtoniſh'd at his Reproof.† 'The Voice of the Lord ſha-'keth the Wilderneſs, the Lord ſhaketh the 'Wilderneſs of *Kadeſh*.* The Voice of thy

† Pſal. xxix. 8. * Pſal. xcvii. 4.

'Thunder was in the Heaven: the Lightnings 'lightned the World, the Earth ſaw, trembled 'and ſhook. The Hills melted like Wax at the 'Preſence of the Lord, at the Preſence of the 'Lord of the whole Earth.' How exalted and ſublime theſe glowing Periods of Inſpiration, in which the ſhaking of the Earth is expreſly aſſerted to be a Work of Almighty Power!

When the glorious God has, upon particular Occaſions, made a miraculous Deſcent upon our Earth, he has frequently been attended with an Earthquake, as one of the Tokens of his ſpecial Preſence. So at the Promulgation of the Law, in all its Terrors, to the attending Tribes, ‡ 'Mount *Sinai* was altogether on a Smoke, 'becauſe the Lord deſcended upon it in Fire: 'and the Smoke thereof aſcended as the Smoke 'of a Furnace, and the whole Mount quaked 'greatly.' We have another Deſcription of this memorable Event in the Song of *Deborah* and *Barak*; * 'Lord, when thou wenteſt out of '*Seir*, when thou marchedſt out of the Field 'of *Edom*, the Earth trembled, and the Heavens 'dropped, the Clouds alſo dropped Water. The 'Mountains melted from before the Lord, even 'that *Sinai* from before the Lord God of *Iſrael*.' So alſo the Pſalmiſt, it is probable in Alluſion to this, expreſſes himſelf with Eloquence more than mortal, † 'When *Iſrael* went out of *Egypt*, 'the Houſe of *Jacob* from a People of ſtrange 'Language, *Judah* was his Sanctuary, and *Iſrael* 'his

* Judg. v. 4. † Pſal. cxiv. 1. ‡ Exod. xix. 19.

'his Dominion. The Sea ſaw it and fled, *Jor-*
'*dan* was driven back. The Mountains ſkipped
'like Rams, the little Hills like Lambs. What
'ailed, thee O thou Sea, that thou fleddeſt?
'Thou *Jordan*, that thou waſt driven back?
'Ye Mountains that ye ſkipped like Rams?
'and ye little Hills like Lambs? Tremble
'thou Earth at the Preſence of the Lord, at
'the Preſence of the God of *Jacob.*' When God afterwards appeared to *Elijah* in the ſame Place, it was with the ſame terrible Circumſtances. An Earthquake was his Attendant.† 'Behold
'the Lord paſſed by, and a great and ſtrong
'Wind rent the Mountains, and break in Pieces
'the Rocks before the Lord, and after the Wind
'an Earthquake.

This may ſuffice to illuſtrate the firſt Thing propoſed, That an Earthquake, tho' it may be accounted for on natural Principles, is notwithſtanding the Work of Almighty Power. The ſupream Being firſt appointed & regulated the Laws of Nature, with infinite Wiſdom & uncontroulable Sovereignty. He over-rules them all, ſuſpends or alters them as he pleaſes. He does his Pleaſure among the Armies of Heaven above, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth beneath; None can ſtay his Hand, controul his Counſels, diſappoint his Purpoſes, or ſay unto him, what doeſt thou? He formed our Globe of ſuch a Conſtitution as to be liable to Earthquakes. And he produces them at ſuch Times, in ſuch Places, and in ſuch Degrees of Violence & Severity, as are moſt

† 1 King. xix. 11.

moſt for his Glory, and beſt calculated to accompliſh the Deſigns of his Providence, in the Government of the natural and the moral World. We proceed to ſay,

II. An Earthquake is not only the Effect of Almighty Power, but a Token of Divine Wrath. —*At his Wrath the Earth ſhall tremble*—

This will evidently appear if we conſult the ſacred Hiſtory. To go as far back as the Days of *Noah*; When God ſaw the Wickedneſs of Man that it was great upon the Earth, his Anger was kindled, and he overwhelmed it with a Flood of Waters. The Foundations of the great Deep were broken up; which no Doubt was attended with horrible Concuſſion. Then the Windows from on high were opened, and the Foundations of the Earth were ſhaken. The Waters rored and were troubled, the Mountains ſhook with the ſwelling thereof. So when God deſcended in the Fierceneſs of his Anger to deſtroy *Sodom*, and the other guilty Cities which were ſprinkled over the Plain; an Earthquake was employed upon this Occaſion: while at the ſame Time Fire and Brimſtone ſhowers impetuous from Heaven, deluges the Valley, and compleats the Ruin. * 'Then the Lord rained upon *Sodom* 'and *Gomorrah* Brimſtone and Fire from the 'Lord out of Heaven. And he *overthrew* thoſe 'Cities, and all the Plain, and all the Inhabi-'tants

* Gen. xix. 54.]

'tants of the Cities, and that which grew upon 'the Ground.' This was the Puniſhment of *Korah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, when they laid an impious Claim to the Employment, the Honors and the Privileges of the Prieſthood, which God had confined to the Family of *Aaron*. The Anger of God was kindled againſt them for their preſumptuous and ſacrilegious Attempt. At his Wrath the Earth trembled, and the bold Conſpirators were hurled headlong, plunged promiſcuous and precipitant into the hideous Vaults below. Down they ſunk, as they were in the very Act to ſacrifice, and inſolently withſtood *Moſes* in the View & at the Head of the Rebel Congregation. Let us turn to the Account, as it is tranſmitted to us in the Oracles of Inſpiration: * 'And *Moſes* ſaid, Hereby ye 'ſhall know that the Lord hath ſent me to do 'all theſe Works: For I have not done them 'of my own Mind. If theſe Men die the com-'mon Death of all Men, or if they be viſited 'after the Viſitation of all Men, then the Lord 'hath not ſent me. But if the Lord make a new 'Thing, and the Earth open her Mouth, and 'ſwallow them up, with all that appertain unto 'them, and they go down quick into the Pit; 'then ye ſhall underſtand that theſe Men have 'provoked the Lord. And it came to paſs, as 'he had made an End of ſpeaking all theſe 'Words, that the Ground clave aſunder that 'was under them: And the Earth opened her 'Mouth,

* Numb. xvi. 28.

'Mouth, and ſwallowed them up, and their 'Houſes, and all the Men that appertained un-'to *Korah*, and all their Goods. They, and all 'that appertained to them, went down alive 'into the Pit, and the Earth cloſed upon them, 'and they periſhed from among the Congrega-'tion. And all *Iſrael* that were round about 'them, fled at the Cry of them; for they ſaid, 'Leſt the Earth ſwallow us up alſo.' So alſo when the *Philiſtines* invaded the Land of *Iſrael* in the Days of *Saul*, God appeared for the Deliverance of his People, and the Confuſion of their Enemies. He reſented their unreaſonable and unrighteous Encroachments, ſtruck a Panic into them, and deſtroyed them by Means of an Earthquake. ‡ 'And there was trem-'bling in the Hoſt, in the Field, and among all 'the People: the Garriſon, & the Spoilers, they 'alſo trembled, and the Earth quaked: ſo it 'was a great Trembling. And the Watchmen 'of *Saul* in *Gibeah* of *Benjamin* looked; and be-'hold the Multitude melted away; and they 'went on beating down one another.' Once more, when the glorious God would in the moſt effectual Manner teſtify his Anger againſt the moſt enormous and execrable Crime that ever was committed in our World, he did it by an Earthquake. At the Crucifixion of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we read particularly, † 'that 'the Earth did quake, and the Rocks rent.' Thus we ſee that an Earthquake is to be look-

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‡ 1 Sam. xiv. 15, 16. † Matth. xxvii. 51.

ed upon as a Token of divine Anger, ſince it appears, from the ſacred Pages, that the Sins of a People have been frequently puniſhed by this moſt terrible Judgment. Thus the Pſalmiſt,* 'Then the Earth ſhook & trembled, the Foun-'dations alſo of the Hills moved & were ſha-'ken, becauſe he was Wroth.'

How often do we find this Judgment denounced by the Prophets, againſt a degenerate and ſinful People! ‡ 'Behold the Day of the 'Lord cometh, cruel both with Wrath & fierce 'Anger, to lay the Land deſolate; and he ſhall 'deſtroy the Sinners thereof out of it. And I 'will puniſh the World for their Evil, and the 'Wicked for their Iniquity. And I will cauſe the 'Arogancy of the Proud to ceaſe, and lay low 'the Haughtineſs of the Terrible. Therefore 'I will ſhake the Heavens, and the Earth ſhall 'remove out of her Place, in the Wrath of the 'Lord of Hoſts, and in the Day of his fierce 'Anger.' † 'Thou ſhalt be viſited of the Lord 'of Hoſts with Thunder, and with Earthquake, 'and with great Noiſe, with Storm & Tempeſt, 'and the Flame of devouring Fire.' ‖ 'This 'People is fooliſh, they have not known me, 'they are ſottiſh Children, and they have none 'Underſtanding: they are wiſe to do Evil, but 'to do Good they have no Knowlege. I be-'held the Earth; and lo, it was without Form 'and void, and the Heavens, and they had no 'Light. I beheld the Mountans, and lo, they trembled,

* Pſal. xviii. 7. ‡ Iſai. xiii. 11. † Iſai. xxix. 6. ‖ Jer. iv. 22.

'trembled, and all the Hills moved lightly. I 'beheld, and lo there was no Man, and all the 'Birds of the Heaven were fled. I beheld, and 'lo, the fruitful Place was a Wilderneſs, and all 'the Cities thereof were broken down at the 'Preſence of the Lord, and by his fierce Anger.'

* 'In my Jealouſy, and in the Fire of my Wrath 'have I ſpoken, Surely there ſhall be a great 'Shaking in the Land, ſo that the Fiſhes of the 'Sea, and the Fowls of the Heaven, and the 'Beaſts of the Field, and all creeping Things 'that creep upon the Earth, and all the Men 'that are upon the Face of the Earth, ſhall 'ſhake at my Preſence; and the Mountains 'ſhall be thrown down, and the ſteep Places 'ſhall fall, & every Wall ſhall fall to the Ground.

'‡ 'Blow the Trumpet in *Zion*, and ſound an 'Alarm in my holy Mountain, let all the In-'habitants of the Land tremble, for the Day 'of the Lord cometh, it is nigh at Hand.—The 'Earth ſhall quake, the Heavens ſhall tremble, 'the Sun and the Moon ſhall be dark, and the 'Stars ſhall withdraw their ſhining.

Upon the whole then, it evidently appears, from what we have heard, that an Earthquake is not only an Effect of Almighty Power, but a Token of Divine Anger. It is a Judgment upon a Land, and it is to be looked upon as ſuch. God threatens it as ſuch againſt a ſinful and degenerate People: And in this Manner he has in Fact frequently teſtified his Anger againſt

* Ezek. xxxviii. 14. ‡ Joel ii. 1, 10.

againſt Sin, and executed his Purpoſes againſt the Sinner. It certainly follows, that whenever a People are thus viſited, they ſhould acknowlege the mighty Hand of God, and humble themſelves under it; they ſhould know the Rod, and who hath appointed it. Some of the Leſſons it is expected we ſhould learn from a Providence of this Nature, and ſome of the Tempers it ſhould produce in us, agreable to what we have heard at this Time, I propoſe at preſent to mention.

I. Is it as we have heard, Is an Earthquake the Work of God? This ſhould give us awful Ideas and ſuitable Apprehenſions of the Divine Majeſty, and the Neceſſity we ſtand in of his Favour.

Shall not his Dread fall upon us, and his Excellency make us afraid? Shall not our Fleſh tremble for fear of him, ſhall we not be afraid of his Judgments? Fear ye not me, ſaith the Lord, will ye not tremble at my Preſence? * 'The Lord reigneth, let the People 'tremble: He ſitteth between the Cherubims, let the Earth be moved.' What little and contemptible Creatures are we in his Sight? Behold the Nations are as a Drop of the Bucket, and are counted as the ſmall Duſt of the Ballance. Behold he taketh up the Iſles as a very little Thing: He ſhakes the Mountains in his Anger; He heaves the ſolid Earth from it's Baſis.

* Pſal. xcix. 1.

What are all the magnificent Structures of Art, or ſtupendous Labours of Men, before that God, who when he pleaſes, can rear them from their Foundation, or plunge them into the gaping Abyſs? What is all the Pomp and Grandeur of the moſt magnificent Earthly Monarch, to that divine Deſcription of the Prophet? * 'God came from *Teman*, and the 'holy One from Mount *Paran*. Selah. His Glory 'covered the Heavens, and the Earth was full 'of his Praiſe. He ſtood, & meaſured the Earth: 'he beheld, and drove aſunder the Nations, and 'the everlaſting Mountains were ſcattered, the 'perpetual Hills did bow: his Ways are Ever-'laſting. I ſaw the Tents of *Cuſhan* in Affliction: 'and the Curtains of the Land of *Midian* did 'tremble. The Mountains ſaw thee, and they 'trembled: the overflowing of the Water paſſed 'by: the Deep uttered his Voice, and liſt up 'his Hands on high.' So alſo at the Reſurrection of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead, when he triumphed over Death & the Grave, and led Captivity Captive, † 'Behold, there was a great 'Earthquake'

Shall we not, from what we have heard, endeavour after that Fear of the Lord, which is the Beginning of Wiſdom, and which will render us cautious how we offend him? He is wiſe in Heart, and mighty in Strength, who hath hardned himſelf againſt Him, and hath proſpered? Who removeth the Mountains, and they

* Hab. iii. 3, 6, 7, 10. † Matth. xxviii. 2.

they know not; who overturneth them in his Anger. Who ſhaketh the Earth out of her Place, and the Pillars thereof tremble. Of what infinite Conſequence and Importance is it, that we have this God for our Friend, that we acquaint our ſelves with him, and be at Peace. This will ſupport us, give us a Preſence of Mind, a Courage, and a Dignity, amidſt all the Convulſions of the Earth, the Ruins of diſſolving Nature. How glorioufly animating is that ſublime Rapture of the Pſalmiſt! * 'God 'is our Refuge and Strength; a very preſent 'Help in Trouble. Therefore will we not 'fear, tho' the Earth be removed, and tho' the 'Mountains be caſt into the Midſt of the Sea. 'Tho' the Waters thereof rore and are trou-'bled, tho' the Mountains ſhake with the 'ſwelling thereof. There is a River, the 'Streams whereof make glad the City of our 'God, the holy Place of the Tabernacles of the 'moſt High. God is in the midſt of her; ſhe 'ſhall not be moved: God ſhall help her, and 'that right early.—The Lord of Hoſts is with 'us, the God of *Jacob* is our Refuge.'— The Man who has the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, and who is ſenſible that his Maker loves him; who ſees God in Chriſt reconciling him to himſelf, accepting him as Righteous, and not imputing his Treſpaſſes to him; O, with what ſacred Serenity and Triumph, may he view theſe terrible Works of God, and ſurvey the

* Pſal. xlvi. 1.

Deſolations which he has made in the Earth! And theſe are the only Principles that will ſupport and abide by us in an Earthquake, when the gay Infidel, the licentious Libertine, and the bold Blaſphemer, forget their wonted Mirth and Frenzy, and tremble in the near Views of a miſerable Eternity. Where can we fly for Refuge, but to God our Maker, in & thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great and only Mediator? Who elſe will be able to protect us in the Day of the Lord's Anger, when the Earth ſhall tremble at his Wrath? This leads me to ſay,

II. Is it as we have heard; This ſhould teach us the Vanity of all Confidence in the Creature, and the Uncertainty of all Earthly Enjoyments.

Let us not put our Confidence in an Arm of Fleſh. Let us ceaſe from Man, whoſe Breath is in his Noſtrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of.—Man that is a Worm, and the Son of Man that is a Worm.— What Defence can we expect here, when God ariſeth to ſhake terribly the Earth? On what Creature can we depend with Succeſs, when even the Ground, on which we tread, is not able to ſupport us?

Where can we meet with a laſting Poſſeſſion, when our very Lands, which one would think would bid the faireſt for it of any Thing here below, when even theſe are liable to be ſunk in an Earthquake, and their Place no more to be found? How great the Folly of thoſe who place their ſupream Felicity in the Poſſeſſions and

and Acquirements of a vain Earth! Who heap up Silver as the Duſt, and prepare Raiment as the Clay! Who ſay to Gold, Thou art my Hope, and to the fine Gold, Thou art my Confidence! Their inward Thought is, that their Houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their Dwelling-Places to all Generations; they call their Lands after their own Names. O the Deceitfulneſs of Riches! What is it that thus inchants and infatuates the Generality of Mankind, for the obtaining of which, they toil and labour, ſacrifice all their Eaſe here, and frequently forego all their Hopes of Happineſs hereafter? Uncertain Riches, which may make themſelves Wings, and flee away as the Eagles towards Heaven, or which may be ſuddenly overthrown by an Earthquake, and buried deep in the Subteraneous Vaults; never more to ſee the Light, till they are illuminated by the Flames of the laſt Conflagration. Let not the rich Man then glory in his Riches, for he that truſteth in his Riches ſhall fall. God ſhall deſtroy thee for ever: He ſhall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy Dwelling-Place, and root thee out of the Land of the Living. The Righteous alſo ſhall ſee and laugh at him. Lo, this is the Man that made not God his Strength, but truſted in the Abundance of his Riches! They profit not in the Day of Wrath, when the Foundations of the Earth tremble.—They that truſt in their Wealth, and boaſt themſelves in the Multitude of their Riches; None of them

can

can by any Means redeem his Brother, or give to God a Ranſom for his Soul. So at the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, by an Earthquake, the Merchants of the Earth are repreſented as utterly unable to help her, and as lamenting over her in all the diſmal Accents of Deſpair; * 'The Merchants, 'which were made rich by her, ſhall ſtand afar 'off, for the fear of her Torment, weeping and 'wailing. And ſaying, Alas, alas, that great City, 'that was cloathed in fine Linen, and Purple, 'and Scarlet, ; and decked with Gold, & pre-'cious Stones, & Pearls: For in one Hour ſo great 'Riches is come to nought!

Seeing then we have here no continuing City, ſhall we not be exhorted to ſeek another, which is an heavenly, to lay up Treaſure in Heaven, and to ſeek after the true Riches, even durable Riches and Righteouſneſs, thoſe Things which remain, for they cannot be ſhaken: That we may know what is the Hope of our Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of our Inheritance among the Saints, even that Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for us?

III. What we have heard teaches us the Evil of Sin, with the Neceſſity of ſincere Repentance, and thoro' Reformation.

We are a ſinful and degenerate People, and the Love of many waxes cold. Where is the Lord God of *Elijah*, the Spirit that animated our

* Rev. xviii. 15.

our pious Predeceſſors? Where is that exemplary, ſtrict and uniform Devotion, that flaming Zeal for God and Religion, which once ſo remarkably adorned and diſtinguiſhed this People? This, which was our Glory, is in a great Meaſure departed from us. We need to be ſhaken out of our Sleep, to be rouſed out of our Lethargy, our ſupine Indolence, our Careleſneſs and carnal Security. This no Doubt was the Deſign of the alarming Providence in the Week paſt. We have heard a Voice of Trembling, of Fear, and not of Peace. The Voice of God to us was as that of the Mariners to *Jonah*;† 'What meaneſt thou, O Sleeper? 'Ariſe, call upon thy God; if ſo be, that God 'will think upon us, that we periſh not.' The Voice of God to us was as that to the Church of *Epheſus*;‡ 'Remember from whence thou art 'fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt Works, leſt 'I come unto thee quickly, and remove thy 'Candleſtick out of its Place.'

It was a terrible Night, the moſt ſo, perhaps, that ever NEW-ENGLAND ſaw. When we remember it, we are afraid, & Trembling taketh hold of our Fleſh. And it was Sin that provoked God to appear againſt us in ſo awful a Manner; and the Land to tremble and ſorrow.— At his Wrath the Earth trembled.— Shall not the Land tremble for this; and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? God might juſtly have overwhelmed us in the Fierceneſs

† Jon. i. 6. ‡ Rev. ii. 5.

Fierceneſs of his Anger, have cruſhed us in our Beds, or buried us in the Bowels of the Earth. We might have ſerved as a fearful Example to ſome future People, of the pernicious Conſequences, and fatal Effects of Sin. So it is threaten'd to a rebellious and impenitent People; * 'The Generation to come of the 'Children that ſhall ariſe after you, and the 'Stranger that ſhall come from a far Land, ſhall 'ſay, when they ſee the Plagues of that Land, 'and that the whole Land is Brimſtone, and 'Salt, and Burning, that it is not ſown nor bear-'eth, nor any Graſs groweth therein, like the 'Overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Admah* 'and *Zeboim*, which the Lord overthrew in 'his Anger, and in his Wrath: even all Nations 'ſhall ſay, wherefore hath the Lord done thus 'unto this Land? What meaneth the Heat of 'this great Anger? Then Men ſhall ſay, be-'cauſe they have forſaken the Covenant of the 'Lord God of their Fathers.' Then might have been made over us that Lamentation of the Prophet; ‡ 'How hath the Lord covered 'the Daughter of *Zion*, with a Cloud, in his 'Anger, and caſt down, from the Heaven to the 'Earth, the Beauty of *Iſrael*, and remembred 'not his Footſtool in the Day of his Anger! 'The Lord hath ſwallowed up all the Habita-'tions of *Jacob*, and hath not pitied; he hath 'thrown down in his Wrath the ſtrong Holds 'of the Daughter of *Judah*, he hath brought them

* Deut. xxix. 22. ‡ Lam. ii. 1, 2, 5.

'them down to the Ground. The Lord was 'an Enemy, he hath ſwallowed up *Iſrael*, he 'hath ſwallowed up all her Palaces; he hath 'deſtroyed his ſtrong Holds, and hath encreaſed 'in the Daughter of *Judah* Mourning & Lamen-'tation.' This might juſtly have been our Condemnation. Is it not then an evil Thing and a bitter, that we have forſaken the Lord our God? Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, let us be perſwaded. Let the Sinners in *Zion* be afraid, let Fearfulneſs ſurprize the Hypocrites thereof.

But behold the Goodneſs as well as Severity of God! and may this Goodneſs of God lead us to Repentance. He is yet giving us Space to repent; he is yet waiting to be gracious to us. He has not dealt with us as our Iniquities deſerve; the Day of Grace is not over with us, nor the Door of Mercy ſhut againſt us. In the midſt of Wrath, he has remembred Mercy, nor ſuffered the deſtroying Angel to lay deſolate the Habitations of his People. O may our warmeſt Gratitude be excited upon this Occaſion, and may we ſtudy what we ſhall render. Let our future Lives be devoted, with double Diligence, to the Service of our gracious Preſerver, and our beſt Benefactor. Let us, without any Delay, repent of our paſt Sins, with a ſincere & thoro' Repentance; that Repentance which is unto Life, never to be repented of. May we fly to the Mercies of God, in and thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the great and only Me-

diator between God & Man. May we know and acknowlege the God of our Fathers; may we ſerve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind.

How happy would it be, if this awful Providence ſhould be bleſſed by God, to the producing a univerſal Reformation of Manners, and a Revival of Religion among us! When the Spirit was poured out upon the Apoſtles & Profeſſors of the primitive Church, it was attended with anEarthquake. So we read, † 'And when they had prayed,the Place was '*ſhaken* where they were aſſembled together, 'and they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt.' May God grant ſuch a plentiful Effuſion of his Spirit, at this Time, in his convincing and converting Influences. May he pour out his Spirit upon his People, and his Bleſſing upon their Offspring. So an Earthquake was ſanctified to the Converſion of the *Jailor*, who had *Paul* and *Silas* under his Cuſtody; * 'And at 'Midnight *Paul* & *Silas* prayed, and ſangPrai-'ſes unto God: and the Priſoners heard them. 'And ſuddenly there was a great Earthquake, 'ſo that the Foundations of the Priſon were 'ſhaken: and immediately all the Doors were 'opened, and every ones Bands were looſed. 'And the Keeper of the Priſon awaking out 'of his Sleep, and ſeeing the Priſon Doors o-'pen, he drew out his Sword, and would have 'killed himſelf, ſuppoſing that the Priſoners 'had

† Act. iv. 31. * Acts xvi. 25.

'had been fled. But *Paul* cried with a loud 'Voice, ſaying, Do thy ſelf no Harm; for we 'are all here. Then he called for a Light, and 'ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down 'before *Paul* and *Silas*; and brought them out, 'and ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved? And 'they ſaid, Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 'and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy Houſe. And 'they ſpake unto him the Word of the Lord, 'and to all that were in his Houſe. And he took 'them the ſame Hour of the Night, and waſhed 'their Stripes; and was baptized, he, and all 'his, ſtraightway. And when he had brought 'them into his Houſe, he ſat Meat before them, 'and rejoyced, believing in God with all his 'Houſe.' Could we ſee the People of this Land, thus enquiring what they ſhall do to be ſaved, & flocking as Doves unto their Windows, then the Lord God of our Fathers would be with us, as he was with our Fathers, and never leave us nor forſake us. Happy is that People that is in ſuch a Caſe, yea happy is that People whoſe God is the Lord! We might then pray with the ſtrongeſt Aſſurances of Succeſs; * 'O 'God, thou haſt caſt us off, thou haſt ſcattered 'us, thou haſt been diſpleaſed; O turn thy 'ſelf to us again. Thou haſt made the Earth 'to tremble; thou haſt broken it; heal the 'Breaches thereof, for it ſhaketh.

But I haſten to ſay,

* Pſal. lx. 1.

IV. What we have heard ſhould teach us the Neceſſity of being in a conſtant actual Readineſs for a dying Hour.

A Sentence of Death is paſſed upon all. The Living know that they muſt die. We know that thou wilt bring us to Death; but we know not the Time, nor the Manner of our Death, nor in what Form the laſt Enemy ſhall approach us. We know not when the Maſter ſhall call for us, whether at Evening, or at Midnight, at the Cock-crowing, or in the Morning. Whenever it ſhall be, may our Loins be girt, our Lamps trim'd and burning. May we ſo number our Days, as that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom. May we devote all our Talents to the Glory of our Lord, and employ them in his Service. May we be perpetually induſtrious in ſome Part of that Work which he has allotted us. Bleſſed is that Servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.

When we ſcruple the Lawfulneſs of any Action, in which we are engaged, let us imagine how we ſhould feel if we were ſurpriz'd, in the midſt of it, by an Earthquake; and not dare to do any Thing which we ſuſpect would then give us Cauſe of uneaſy Reflection.

By thus going on in an uninterrupted Courſe of Duty, leading a holy and conſcientious Life, realiſing our own Diſſolution, and habituating our ſelves to the Thoughts of it, we ſhall by Degrees, with the Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, be

be greatly victorious over the Fears of Death, and in a conſtant actual Readineſs for its Approach: Nor need we be anxious as to the Time, the Manner, or the Circumſtances of it. Should we be ſoon alarmed, & taken away by the fatal Stroke; the Difficulties and Temptations of Life will be the ſooner over, and our Paſſage thro' this Vale of Tears of a ſhorter Continuance. Should our Attack from the laſt Enemy be ſudden; our Tranſition will be ſo much the quicker and the eaſier, to the Regions of immortal Glory: Should it be painful; Heaven will be ſo much the more welcome, when we arrive there: Should it be attended with the moſt formidable Circumſtances; bleſſed be God, we may be ſtill ſecure: Tho' the Body ſhould be cruſh'd in an Earthquake, or ſink deep in the Subteraneous Vaults; the Soul ſhall be catch'd away, and tower aloft, upon the Pinions of Guardian Angels; ſafe and unhurt, amidſt this Diſcord of Nature, this Convulſion of jarring Elements, the Wrecks of Matter, and the Cruſh of Worlds. The Soul and the Body are indeed at preſent ſeperated: but with a ſure and certain Hope of being again re-united, in better and more glorious Circumſtances; at that illuſtrious and tremendous Day, when the Earth ſhall give up the Dead that are in it.

This leads me to ſay,

V. and Laſtly, Earthquakes ſhould remind us of the ſecond Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, at the Day of Judgment.

They

They are designed to be Warnings to the World, that this Day of the Lord is at Hand: It is near, it is near, and it hasteth greatly, when the Heavens shall pass away, with a great Noise; 'and the Elements shall melt, with fervent Heat.' As a Prelude to this, we read, ‡ 'There shall 'be Earthquakes in divers Places; * There 'shall be Signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and 'in the Stars; and upon the Earth, Distress of 'Nations, with Perplexity, the Sea and the 'Waves roring; Mens Hearts failing them for 'Fear, and for looking after those Things, which 'are coming on the Earth: for the Powers of 'Heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they 'see the Son of Man, coming in a Cloud, with 'Power and great Glory.' † 'Thus saith 'the Lord of Hosts, yet once, it is a little 'while, and I will shake the Heavens, and the 'Earth, and the Sea, and the dry Land: And 'I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all 'Nations shall come.' Antichrist shall first be destroyed by the Breath of the Lord, and by the Brightness of his Appearance. An Earthquake shall be employed on this Occasion. So it is described by *John* in his Revelations, ‡ 'And 'the seventh Angel poured out his Vial into the 'Air; and there came a great Voice out of the 'Temple of Heaven, from the Throne, saying, 'It is done. And there were Voices, and Thun-'ders, and Lightnings; and there was a great 'Earthquake, such as was not since Men were 'upon

‡ Matth. xxiv. 7. * Luk. xxi. 25. † Hag. ii. 6. Rev. xvj. 17.

'upon the Earth, ſo mighty an Earthquake, and 'ſo great. And the great City was divided 'into three Parts, and the Cities of the Nations 'fell: and great *Babylon* came in Remembrance 'before God, to give unto her the Cup of the 'Wine of the Fierceneſs of his Wrath. And 'every Iſland fled away, and the Mountains 'were not found.' * 'And a mighty Angel 'took up a Stone like a great Milſtone, and caſt 'it into the Sea, ſaying, Thus with Violence 'ſhall that great City Babylon be thrown down, 'and ſhall be found no more at all. And the 'Voice of Harpers, and Muſicians, and of Pi-'pers, and Trumpeters, ſhall be heard no more 'at all in thee; and no Craftſman, of whatſo-'ever Craft he be, ſhall be found any more in 'thee; and the Sound of a Milſtone ſhall be 'heard no more at all in thee: And the Light 'of a Candle ſhall ſhine no more at all in thee; 'and the Voice of the Bridegroom, and of the 'Bride, ſhall be heard no more at all in thee: 'for thy Merchants were the great Men of the 'Earth; for by thy Sorceries were all Nations 'deceived. And in her was found the Blood of 'Prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were 'ſlain upon the Earth.'

What univerſal Conſternation and Horror, will then overſpread the Face of this whole Earth! We had a little Emblem of this in that awful Night, which we now commemorate: So ſhall the Coming of the Son of Man be, and 'ſo

* Rev. xviii. 21.

ſo ſhall the Wicked flee, even as they fled before the Earthquake. * 'They ſhall go into 'the Caves of the Earth, into the Clefts of the 'Rocks, and the Tops of the ragged Rocks, 'for Fear of the Lord, and for the Glory of 'his Majeſty, when he ariſeth to ſhake terribly 'the Earth.' Thus alſo the Viſion of the Prophetick Evangeliſt; ‡ 'And I beheld when 'he had opened the ſixth Seal, and lo, there 'was a great Earthquake, and the Sun became 'black as Sackcloth of Hair, and the Moon 'became as Blood; And the Stars of Heaven 'fell unto the Earth, even as a Fig-Tree caſt-'eth her untimely Figs, when ſhe is ſhaken of 'a mighty Wind: And the Heaven departed 'as a Scrowl, when it is rolled together; and 'every Mountain and Iſland were moved out 'of their Places: And the Kings of the Earth, 'and the great Men, and the rich Men, and 'the chief Captains, and the mighty Men, and 'every bond Man, and every free Man, hid 'themſelves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of 'the Mountains; and ſaid to the Mountains 'and Rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the 'Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and 'from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the great 'Day of his Wrath is come; and who ſhall be 'able to ſtand?' But where can they fly for Shelter and Security in this awful & tremendous Hour? '† Thine Hand, O Lord, ſhall find out all thine 'Enemies; thy right Hand ſhall find out them 'that

* Iſai. ii. 19. ‡ Rev. vi. 12. † Pſal. xxi. 8.

'that hate thee: Thou ſhalt make them as a 'fiery Oven in the Time of thine Anger: The 'Lord ſhall ſwallow them up in his Wrath, and 'the Fire ſhall devour them.' ‡ 'Fear, and the 'Pit, and the Snare are upon thee, O Inhabi-'tant of the Earth. And it ſhall come to paſs, 'that he who fleeth from the Noiſe of the Fear, 'ſhall fall into the Pit; and he that cometh 'up out of the midſt of the Pit, ſhall be taken 'in the Snare: for the Windows from on high 'are open, and the Foundations of the Earth 'do ſhake. The Earth is utterly broken down, 'the Earth is clean diſſolved, the Earth is mo-'ved exceedingly. The Earth ſhall reel to 'and fro like a Drunkard, and ſhall be remov-'ed like a Cottage, and the Tranſgreſſion there-'of ſhall be heavy upon it, and it ſhall fall, and 'not riſe again.' Then the Righteous ſhall be caught up to meet the Lord in the Air; there they ſhall ſit ſecure, and abide under the Sha-dow of the Almighty. From thence they ſhall look down with holy Triumph, behold the wonderful Works of God, and view the Deſolations which he is making in the Earth. '† The Lord alſo ſhall rore out of *Zion*, and 'utter his Voice from *Jeruſalem*, and the Hea-'vens and the Earth ſhall ſhake: but the Lord 'will be the Hope of his People, and the 'Strength of the Children of Iſrael.' * 'The 'Mountains quake at him, the Hills melt,

‡ Iſai. xxiv. 17. † Joel iii. 16. * Nah. i. 5.

'and the Earth is burnt at his Preſence, yea,
'the World, and all that dwell therein. Who
'can ſtand before his Indignation? and who
'can abide in the Fierceneſs of his Anger? his
'Fury is poured out like Fire, and the Rocks
'are thrown down by him. The Lord is good,
'a ſtrong Hold in the Day of Trouble, and he
'knoweth them that truſt in him' If we are ſo happy as to be of this bleſſed Number, and have ſecured this God for our Friend, in and thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; we may then look and long for this bleſſed Hope, this glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.—We may rejoyce in all the Tokens of his near Approach; we may lift up our Heads with Joy, for our Redemption draweth nigh.—We may be ardently deſirous that this Appearance of the Son of Man ſhould be haſtened.—Why is his Chariot ſo long in coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot? Then may we unite, with Rapture, in that animating Prayer of the Prophet, with which I cloſe; ‡ 'Oh that thou wouldſt rent the Hea-
'vens, that thou wouldſt come down, that
'the Mountains might flow down at thy Pre-
'ſence; as when the melting Fire burneth, the
'Fire cauſeth the Waters to boil; to make thy
'Name known to thine Adverſaries, that the
'Nations may tremble at thy Preſence. When
'thou didſt terrible Things which we looked
'not

‡ Iſai. lxiv. 1.

'not for, thou cameſt down, the Mountains
'flowed down at thy Preſence. For ſince
'the Beginning of the World, Men have
'not heard, nor perceived by the Ear, neither
'hath the Eye ſeen, O God, beſides thee, what
'he hath prepared for him that waiteth for
'him.

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6 AP64